

~~SECRET~~

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

4 September 1951

MEMORANDUM FOR THE INTELLIGENCE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

SUBJECT: NIE-41: Probable Developments in the Kashmir Dispute  
to the End of 1951

1. The attached draft estimate has been approved by the Board of National Estimates pursuant to a consideration of it by the IAC representatives.

2. In an effort to restrict the "Conclusions" to bare essentials, with a minimum of explanation, the Board has shortened this section of the draft somewhat from the draft as considered by the IAC representatives. It is believed that no changes of substance have been made in this process.

3. This estimate has been placed on the agenda of the IAC meet scheduled for 10:30 Thursday, 6 September 1951.

25X1A9a

  
Executive Secretary

Distribution "A"

~~SECRET~~

DOCUMENT NO. \_\_\_\_\_  
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ( )  
☒ DECLASSIFIED  
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C  
NEXT REVIEW DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
AUTH: HR 70-2  
DATE: 4 MARCH 81 REVIEWER: 018557

~~SECRET~~

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
OFFICE OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES

4 September 1951

SUBJECT: NIE-41: PROBABLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE KASHMIR  
DISPUTE TO THE END OF 1951

THE PROBLEM

To estimate probable developments in the Kashmir dispute during 1951, with particular reference to the possible use of armed force, and to indicate the consequences for US security interests of war between India and Pakistan.

CONCLUSIONS

1. India and Pakistan have once again reached a critical state of tension over Kashmir. The military forces of both countries are deployed in readiness for war, and very few additional measures would be required for either to initiate hostilities.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

2. The Indian Government (GOI) is unlikely to precipitate war deliberately, but is prepared to accept war and is unlikely to act to reduce the tension.

3. The Pakistan Government (GOP) is unlikely to precipitate war deliberately so long as the UN appears to GOP leaders to offer hope of effective action. However, there is a possibility that the GOP would deliberately launch or sponsor local action in Kashmir, especially between 15 September and 1 November.

4. There is some chance that, in the current high state of tension, military, political, or religious pressures might bring on hostilities.

5. In the event of war, there will almost certainly be fighting not only in Kashmir, but also in the Punjab and probably East Pakistan (Bengal). It is unlikely that the UN could effect a cease-fire, if either side had gained a material advantage from the fighting.

6. In any extended conflict India would probably be victorious, but its victory would not be quick or easy.

7. The most important consequence of war would be internal deterioration in both countries, which might open the way for a

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

Communist seizure of power in parts or all of India. In addition, war might adversely affect US relations with both countries, and would probably deprive the US of potential air bases in Pakistan and of important raw materials from India.

~~SECRET~~

DISCUSSION

The Current Situation

8. Troop movements by both India and Pakistan since May have greatly increased the tension between the two countries and the possibility of major hostilities. Almost 90 percent of India's and 70 percent of Pakistan's ground combat forces are now deployed opposite each other in Kashmir itself, and on the Punjab and East Pakistan (Bengal) frontiers.

9. Pursuant to a Security Council resolution of 30 March 1951, Dr. Frank Graham is now in the subcontinent seeking to achieve agreement on demilitarization of Kashmir as a prelude to an impartial plebiscite to determine its permanent affiliation. Graham is due to report to the Council by 29 September, though he may seek a delay.

10. The chief focus of dispute at the present time is the projected election of a Constituent Assembly in the area of Kashmir controlled by Indian forces under the 1949 UN cease-fire and containing about three quarters of the population. These elections are scheduled for 10-30 September, under the auspices of the pro-

~~SECRET~~

Indian Government of Kashmir, headed by Sheikh Abdullah, for the declared purpose of establishing a constitutional government for all of Kashmir.

11. The Constituent Assembly elections are bitterly opposed by Pakistan, and Prime Minister Kiasquat Ali Khan has threatened war to prevent them. Although the UN has written a letter to India stating that the elections are contrary to the spirit of the March 30 resolution, Abdullah and the Indian Government have reiterated their intention to proceed with the plan.

Basic Objectives of the Parties in Kashmir

12. The dominant motivating force of both India and Pakistan on the Kashmir issue is nationalism tinged with religion. The issue focuses the deepest passions of both countries, and since 1947 public opinion, particularly in Pakistan, has made it one of national prestige. To Pakistan, founded on the principle of a Moslem nation, it seems intolerable that the largest of the sub-continent's princely states, containing a predominantly (78 percent) Moslem population, should be handed over to India. To the Indians, who have waged a vigorous campaign to take over the princely states left uncommitted by partition, it appears all but unthinkable to

~~SECRET~~

give up a state whose ruler formally acceded to India in 1947.

Nehru's feelings about Kashmir are intensified by his long association with Sheikh Abdullah, by the fact that he himself is of Kashmiri descent, and by his strong belief in the concept of a secular state embracing both Moslems and Hindus.

13. Strategically, the Pakistanis view Kashmir as an important military gateway that would enable India to threaten Pakistan's principal military base area at Rawalpindi and also major agricultural areas. Indian strategic interest is less marked; a Pakistani Kashmir would outflank much of the East Punjab, but the border terrain is difficult.

14. Economically, Kashmir's trade is with Pakistan rather than India. Possession of Kashmir would slightly improve Pakistan's control over the vital water supply obtained from the four major tributaries of the Indus River, though it would not prevent India from carrying out a present threat to impair the flow of two of these tributaries that cross Indian territory before entering Pakistan.

15. Eventually, both India and Pakistan might be satisfied with less than the whole of Kashmir. However, both are adamant in

~~SECRET~~

demanding control of the Vale area, the heart of the state, which has a Moslem majority but is on the Indian side of the cease-fire line.

Political Prospects in the Absence of War

16. India's trump card is its present control of the Vale. A plebiscite conducted under impartial auspices in the near future would probably produce a majority in the Vale for accession to Pakistan. However, Indian control, with the inevitable intimidation and ban on pro-Pakistan religious campaigning, would presumably produce a result favorable to India in any Constituent Assembly elections.

17. Therefore, it is extremely unlikely that India will postpone or cancel the elections. There is no indication of any further UN action to block the elections and almost no chance that India would heed the UN if it did take such action.

18. If the elections are held, the resulting Constituent Assembly will undoubtedly pass some form of resolution in favor of final affiliation with India. Although Indian spokesmen have conceded that such a resolution would not be binding on the UN,

~~SECRET~~



~~SECRET~~

India will certainly make maximum propaganda use of it and may later reverse its position. Moreover, the creation of a constitutional "independent" government (in contrast to the "puppet" Azad Government of the Pakistan-occupied part of Kashmir) may enlist growing loyalty and support among the Kashmiris. In this way the Indians undoubtedly hope eventually to present the world with a fait accompli, at least as to the areas now under Indian control.

19. Confronted by this sequence of events, Pakistan — if it did not go to war — would certainly seek further UN action. Because of its willingness to accept an impartial plebiscite, Pakistan undoubtedly believes that it has a superior moral case at this stage of the dispute and that further UN resolutions will be favorable to it. At the very least it can count on firm political support from Arab and Moslem nations and to a large extent from the British Commonwealth nations. Present reports indicate that Dr. Graham has little chance of obtaining an agreed solution. He may propose the appointment of an arbitrator (already rejected by India) or perhaps formulate his own plan for demilitarization, and these recommendations would go to the Security Council. At the same time Pakistan would almost certainly propose a new resolution

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

specifically denouncing and refusing to recognize the Constituent Assembly elections. Reference to the General Assembly in November is also a possibility (and need not mean withdrawal of Security Council jurisdiction); Pakistan might welcome this move as a more effective means of bringing the pressure of world opinion to bear on India.

Indian and Pakistani Military Capabilities\*

20. The recent Indian troop movements have brought India's strength in Kashmir itself to an estimated 68,000 men. In the East Punjab, India has a striking force of 75,000, including an armored division and an independent armored brigade. Close to the borders of East Pakistan in Bengal, India has 25,000 to 28,000 men.

21. In Kashmir itself, Pakistani and Azad Kashmir troops number about 18,000. In the Lahore-Wazirabad area of the Punjab, Pakistan has 57,000 men. Another 15,000 are in reserve at Peshawar, and could be moved rapidly to either front. Elsewhere in West Pakistan, about 20,000 men are deployed on internal security. In East Pakistan, Pakistan's forces total an estimated 10,000.

\* Full details on the comparative strengths of the Indian and Pakistani armed forces are given in an Appendix attached to this estimate.

~~SECRET~~

22. The Indian Air Force and Navy, though small, are superior to Pakistan's and India has far greater trained reserves and manpower resources. Moreover, India has some industrial capacity for arms production, while Pakistan has virtually none and would be heavily dependent on outside supplies. Another major Pakistan weakness is the fact that its transportation and communications network in West Pakistan parallels the Indian frontier and is extremely vulnerable to attack.

23. In an all-out war with Pakistan, India probably would be victorious provided Pakistan received no substantial outside help. Initially, probably neither country would gain a decisive victory, and in the first stages Pakistan might even win some battles. But in time the balance would be tipped in India's favor by its over-all advantages. The Indian Navy could blockade Karachi, West Pakistan's only major port, and the Indian Air Force could neutralize the Pakistani Air Force, though its own offensive capabilities are meager.

24. In a limited action designed by either country solely to take all or part of Kashmir, India would probably also be victorious, but its success would not be quick or easy. India's

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

present troop superiority in the area would be partially offset by the mountainous terrain and by the difficulty of bringing up supplies and reinforcements over the single road between India and Kashmir. Pakistan's communications into the area are, on the other hand, relatively good. There are better roads, easier passes, and lower grades.

25. Important elements in any conflict between the two countries would be the attitude of Afghanistan and of the Pathan tribesmen of the North West Frontier Province. Afghanistan itself, which has been diligently courted by India, would probably make border raids on Pakistan; past raids have already resulted in the deployment of elements of two Pakistani divisions near the Afghan frontier. On the other hand, in spite of continuing Afghan propaganda, some of the Pathan tribesmen would probably fight again on the Pakistani side, as in 1947, and if so their warlike qualities would substantially augment initial Pakistani strength in Kashmir.

26. Weather conditions would seriously hamper military operations in Kashmir and the Punjab until after the Southwest

~~SECRET~~

monsoon ends, generally about 15 September. For a short time thereafter, major rivers in the Punjab area would be deep and unfordable, and it has been reported that flood conditions now exist in the Lahore area and will prevent operations there until at least 1 October. Thereafter, fighting conditions should be most favorable in Kashmir to the end of November and in the Punjab until next April, although winter conditions would not preclude operations in Kashmir. In Bengal, the monsoon ends later, and the most favorable period would be December and January.

Likelihood of War to the End of 1951

A. Deliberate War by India

27. In general, Indian forces are now deployed so that they could either conduct defensive operations or launch strong attacks in the Punjab and against most of the important centers of East Pakistan. No other movement of troops would be necessary for India to make war on all fronts, and it is believed that the Indian forces have sufficient supplies to carry out at least a major initial attack.

~~SECRET~~

28. We estimate that, despite its troop dispositions, the Indian Government (GOI) is unlikely to precipitate a war deliberately during this period. Its reasons against war are formidable: (a) India already controls the disputed area; (b) war would disrupt the Constituent Assembly elections and subsequent plans; (c) time is all on India's side — even if the elections were postponed, its possession of most of the disputed areas would still leave it in a strong position gradually to win over the Kashmiris; and (d) any extended war would be a serious threat to Indian economic and political stability and would almost certainly lead to widespread communal rioting between Hindus and Moslems. The only contrary arguments of any possible weight are that: (a) a war that led to quick victories in the West Punjab and East Pakistan would help the government's wavering prestige; (b) most of India, including Nehru, opposed partition and would welcome an opportunity to re-integrate Pakistan. However, Nehru is almost certainly too well aware of the risks to be swayed by the first of these considerations, and anti-partition sentiment does not generally go to the length of seeking war.

29. Indian actions are consistent with this view of Indian intentions. Its recent troop movements were probably designed to forestall Pakistani interference with the Constituent Assembly elections while further deterring Pakistan by the threat of a Punjab counterattack.

30. Nonetheless, India is clearly willing to accept war and is extremely unlikely on its own initiative to withdraw its forces in such a way as to relax the tension. In the event of war, India would be unlikely to permit hostilities to be confined to Kashmir, but would probably take advantage of its superiority on the Punjab front and perhaps in Bengal.

B. Deliberate War by Pakistan

31. Pakistan's troops are deployed defensively, but are in positions in the Lahore-Wazirabad area from which they could attack either the Jammu City area of Indian-controlled Kashmir or the East Punjab. In the latter case, however, an attack could not be in more than division strength unless forward movements were first made from the Wazirabad area. The Pakistani forces in Kashmir

itself could not launch more than a very limited attack at this time without substantial reinforcements, which would require major troop movements from other areas.

32. The Pakistan Government (GOP) appears unlikely to precipitate war deliberately. It is possible, however, that the GOP would deliberately launch or sponsor local action in Kashmir, as it did in 1947. This possibility will be greatest during and immediately after the Constituent Assembly elections (roughly 15 September to 1 November).

33. There are strong reasons that should deter Pakistan from resorting to war. In a long war Pakistan would almost certainly lose East Pakistan (containing 60 percent of its population) and major Punjab areas, and its economic and political stability — even its very existence — would be threatened. However, the extreme statements of Liaquat and other Pakistani leaders indicate that they may be reaching a dangerous mood of frustration in which these considerations would be outweighed by the desire to thwart the Constituent Assembly elections. Moreover, the Pakistani leaders, some of whom tend to be contemptuous of Indian fighting qualities, may believe that their forces could make quick gains in



~~SECRET~~

Kashmir (even to capturing Srinagar) and conduct a holding action in the Punjab (possibly aided by the reported floods), after which Pakistan would appeal for a new UN cease-fire. Pakistani statements have used every possible argument to put India in the wrong and encourage support for a contention in the UN that military action in Kashmir is justified because of Indian obduracy and the illegality of the Constituent Assembly elections. There is some possibility that Pakistan might encourage both the tribesmen and the Azad Kashmir forces (aided by Pakistan regulars "on leave") to attack in Kashmir and then disclaim responsibility. GOP leaders might believe that, at the very least, hostilities in Kashmir would bring about immediate UN action favorable to Pakistan.

34. If the Constituent Assembly is elected and convenes, the GOP's course of action will depend on whether the UN offers real hope of a solution that would offset the effect of the elections and permit an impartial plebiscite. The actions of the Constituent Assembly, plus Indian "crowing," will undoubtedly tend to increase army and popular pressure for war, and if the Security Council failed to take even the steps of denunciation and arbitration, the GOP might give way to this pressure and start a war deliberately. However, so long as the UN appears to GOP leaders to offer any hope of effective action, the GOP will probably not resort to war deliberately.

~~SECRET~~

C. Unpremeditated War

35. Apart from the possibility of deliberate war, we estimate that there is some chance that war will be brought on during this period by a chain reaction of explosive factors. These include:

- a. Unauthorized military action by elements of the Pakistan Army. For some time a militant group in Pakistan has agitated for aggressive action. An anti-government plot from this source was nipped in the bud by the GOP in the spring of 1951. While a recurrence of actual revolt appears improbable, members of this group might succeed in turning a border incident into a large-scale conflict at any time.
- b. Popular feeling in Pakistan. The GOP has exercised effective control over the press and radio to date, and US Embassy Karachi believes the GOP can continue to suppress inflammatory statements if it so desires. Nevertheless, the possibility of a dangerous surge of feeling exists.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

- c. Renewal of the widespread communal rioting that took place in Bengal in the spring of 1951. This would further arouse feeling in both countries.
- d. Indian internal politics. Popular sentiment in India is no less intense but notably calmer than in Pakistan, and Nehru appears to enjoy virtually unanimous support on the Kashmir issue. However, some elements of the right wing of the Congress Party are sympathetic to the strongly anti-Moslem and anti-Pakistan Hindu Mahasabha, and there is a possibility of inflammatory statements for political advantage.

36. The chance of unpremediated war arising from the above factors is likely to diminish only if there is a substantial relaxation of tension. Neither side is likely to relax the tension by withdrawing troops, but there is a bare possibility that Nehru might make some conciliatory statement or that he and Liaquat might temper the situation by meeting to settle subsidiary issues, such as the water dispute. So long as India pursues the Constituent Assembly plan, the only real chance for relaxation appears to lie

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

in UN action that would offer hope, not only to the leaders of the Pakistan Government but also to the army and people of Pakistan, that the effects of the Constituent Assembly plan would be offset.

Consequences of War for US Security Interests

37. It is unlikely that a war between India and Pakistan could be confined to Kashmir. At the very outset of hostilities, the UN might be able to achieve a cease-fire, though India probably would not accept one that left Pakistani forces in control of the Vale. Once hostilities were fully under way, cease-fire would be unlikely so long as either side had hope of major immediate gains. War on a broad scale would have a serious effect on US security interest.

38. In the first place, war would increase general world tension and uncertainty. Diplomatically, its immediate effect would be to subject the US to heavy pressures for support from both sides. Whether or not the US took an active role in attempting to settle the conflict, war would increase the risk that US policy

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

might alienate one or both of the parties and adversely affect their positions in the East-West conflict.

39. Militarily, war would almost certainly remove any early prospect of Pakistan's joining in plans for defense of the Middle East against a Communist attack. US security interests would also be affected directly through the denial, by an immobilized or neutralist Pakistan, of potentially important air base sites that could be used for bomber strikes against any part of the USSR.

40. From an economic standpoint, if hostilities spread to Bengal, the shipment of important raw materials from Calcutta, including mica, kyanite, and jute, would be impeded or halted. General disorder in India might also cause interruption of shipments of manganese, which would have serious effects on US industry since over 30 percent of the US supply currently comes from India. While replacements for these supplies could almost certainly be found in the long-run, there would be some short-run procurement problems.

41. By far the most important probable development, however, would be internal deterioration in India and Pakistan. Although the outbreak of hostilities might initially strengthen the respective

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

governments' control, any extended fighting would so weaken both countries as to make the maintenance of orderly government a matter of question. There would almost certainly be vast communal disturbances and a resulting increase in the severity of the refugee problem. Such conditions might permit the Indian Communist Party to take over various local areas, and there is a possibility that it would be able, with Chinese help, to assume control of the government.\* Outright Communist control is extremely unlikely in Pakistan, but a state of internal chaos and immobilization would be probable.

---

\* The consequences of Communist control of India to US security interest vis-a-vis the USSR, especially in Southeast Asia and the Near East, are considered in NIE-23, "Position of India in the East-West Conflict."

~~SECRET~~

NIE-41

## APPENDIX

## COMPARATIVE STRENGTHS OF INDIAN AND PAKISTANI ARMED FORCES

## I. ARMY

	<u>India</u>	<u>Pakistan</u>
Active strength	400,000	198,000
Organized National Guard	a	b
Major tactical units:		
Divisions c	6 Inf, 1 Armd, 1 Lofc	1 Inf
Independent brigades	13	1 Armd
Independent infantry battallions	45	—
Kashmiri battallions d	10	20
National Guard battallions in service	—	7

- 
- a. India has been organizing a Territorial Army. Its ultimate size is programmed for 130,000, but thus far India has had only limited success in recruiting men for this force. The mission of the Territorial Army is to serve, not as a combat force, but as an internal police force in time of war.
- b. Pakistan has a part-time National Guard, unarmed, with a personnel strength of about 47,000. (Seven battallions, totalling about 6,700 men, were recently called to active duty.)
- c. According to their respective tables of organization, Indian divisions consist of about 21,500 men and Pakistani divisions of about 18,000 men. Brigades of both countries consist of about 3,000 men. However, Indian units are very elastic and are often considerably over strength.
- d. Kashmiri battallions in the Indian Army are believed to be at full strength, i.e. 1,000 men per unit, but they are probably inferior in quality to the regular Indian units. Although the Kashmiri battallions in the Pakistani Army contain only about 650 men each, they are nearly as good in quality as the regular Pakistani units.

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

## II. NAVY

	<u>India</u>	<u>Pakistan</u>
Light cruisers	1	—
Destroyers	3	3
Frigates	6	4
Large minesweepers	6 (3 inactive)	4 (3 inactive)
Lesser types and auxiliaries	18	8

## III. AIR FORCE

	<u>India</u>	<u>Pakistan</u>
Jet fighters	22 Vampires*	1 Vickers Attacker**
Conventional fighters	128 Tempests	84 Hawker Furies
Light Bombers	27 B-24's	7 Halifaxes
2-engine Transports	57	24

---

\* India has 17 additional jet fighters on order from the UK. None of the 22 on hand have been assigned to tactical units.

\*\* Pakistan has 35 additional jet fighters on order from the UK. Its one jet on hand is not assigned to a tactical unit.

~~SECRET~~